

The Centaurian Sentinel

Dedicated to J. Michael Straczynski's television series *Babylon 5*.

5

Data File 20

BABYLON 5 EDITION

April 1996

JOHN IACOVELLI SETS THE STAGE FOR THE FUTURE

This interview was conducted at Babylonian Productions on October 10, 1995 by Tom Bateman

The Centaurian Sentinel: How did you first become involved with the *BABYLON 5* project?

John Iacovelli: I've had a long association with John Copeland and Doug Netter on other projects for Lockheed, NASA and other kinds of promotional films we did. I first became involved when John Copeland called and told me that they had a script for a new sci-fi show. I then met with John, Doug, Ron Thornton and Joe Straczynski. Joe gave me the early script for the pilot. I read it and I liked it very much. I had never been a sci-fi fanatic, but I loved *Star Wars* and *Blade Runner* and *Alien*. It was actually quite a bit different from the one that was shot. I came up with a way of actually doing the show feasibly from my experience of working on other shows such as *Santa Barbara* and *The Cosby Show*. I knew how we could schedule and shoot a lot of sets in limited space on a quick schedule. We always knew it would be low budget and we knew the problem with sci-fi shows like *V* and the original *Star Trek* series was that the studios get nervous about the cost of them because they typically go over budget. You can never have enough money in science fiction, you always want it to be the latest and neatest. I think that it's important to do a good job, but also to do it well. My theater training in New York and working in opera taught me that I really knew that we could use the same sets differently if we just changed the dressing and paint scheme they could be different sets. So that's still the kind of stuff that we do, and I think it's kind of unusual for television. I remember when we first built the Draal tunnel, it was in an outside shop (Scenic Arts . . . they've built most of our sets) and another Art Director from television was over there and I was told that he

said "Wow, it's too bad that, in our shows, we never get to do this kind of painting and this kind of work." I thought: "Well, anybody can do it. It's just wanting to do it and knowing that it is different." I think our show has always had a different look.

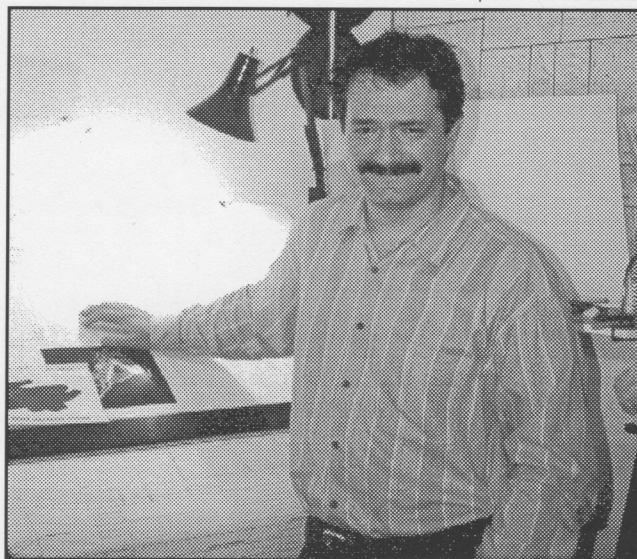


photo ©1996 Tom Bateman

John Iacovelli
BABYLON 5's Production Designer

Certainly there has been a lot of talk about the influences in our show, but also I think that if you flip through the channels we look different from the other shows, especially the other space shows. We use color better. I think we use color in a different way, and I think that just our sensibilities are different. They're not as clean, not as neat and tidy and I think this is reflected (in a good way) in our final product.

CS: What is your approach to an episode upon receiving the script?

Jl: The first thing we get is the script and Joe is really good. So far this third season he has written all the scripts, which is unusual. We get them sometimes as many as five or eight weeks in advance of when they shoot. The first thing we do is look at the set breakdown in the front of the script. I then read the script the first time just for enjoyment. I like the characters and I look for what's happening. They're very well written scripts. So after that, I

basically look at it and I think – well, how many sets do we already have? How much dressing do we already have? Then I talk with my staff and ask, "What do you guys think?" That meeting is usually with the Art Director, the Assistant Art Director, the

Prop Master, the Graphic Artist and the Set Decorator. We talk loosely about how we want to approach this episode. Do we need to tell them that they can or can't do it? For example, in show #10, there's a new cockpit being designed that we're getting early because we had the script early. Then what happens is we run questions or ideas past Joe and John and try to come up with a schedule. Sometimes we can't afford to do all the sets that are in an episode and then Joe and John decide which sets should be cut or not or combined or whatever. When the director comes on seven days before we start shooting we have an informal meeting with him right away to talk about what his point of view is. Usually if

it's a director that we've worked with before, (which most of our directors are) they know the show already, so there's not a lot of education that we need to do. If it's a new director as Adam Nimoy is this season, we keep a card file of all the pictures from all the different sets so we can help him get up to speed. Then we have a more formal meeting called an Art Department meeting which is with the first AD and the director, John Copeland and all the members of the art department that are keys. We talk through the script scene by scene and talk about everything that's involved: the sets, the props, the scheduling, what's needed when, how we can do this, what we can do, what we can't do, what kind of graphics – sort of the "what ifs?" come up in that meeting. Then we go back and we put together ground plans and white models and sections and elevations of the different sets. We try to do everything the

continued on page 3

AGGIECON XXVII

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
March 21-24, 1996

Media Guest: Richard Biggs

Aggiecon is a long-standing science fiction convention held each Spring at A&M. They concentrate on literary SF, but they occasionally invite a media guest, too. There wasn't as much multi-track programming as in the past, but what they had was good. The video programming was weak (unless you were an anime fan), but the art show was very good and the dealer's room was adequate. There weren't enough B5 dealers for my taste, but to be fair, there's not that much merchandise out there, yet. (I looked pretty closely and didn't see any dealer selling bootleg B5 stuff, by the way.)

Of course, one of the principal draws was Richard "Rick" Biggs. He's a lot more outgoing and energetic than Dr. Franklin (and better-looking, too, outside of the stuffy medlab jacket). He added some unusual things to his talk, such as throwing in a trivia question every few minutes for prizes (signed B5 glossies). He has taught acting for the last fifteen years and he brought

up two audience members for an interesting demonstration of his teaching techniques.

He also answered questions about the show, of course. Franklin will definitely still have problems with the stims. Biggs and JMS both felt that Franklin was too perfect and needed to become more human. The show has already received letters of praise from doctors and nurses for the realistic portrayal of a fairly widespread problem in the medical profession.

He greatly enjoyed working with Paul Winfield (who played his father) since he has admired him for many years. There aren't any plans to bring Winfield back at the moment, but Biggs would welcome a sequel.

Anne-Marie Johnson, who played Mariah Cirrus in "The Long Dark", won't be returning. (She was the survivor of the sleeper ship with whom Dr. Franklin becomes infatuated.) Biggs was just as happy they didn't follow up with that, as he had some reservations about the episode. He felt that Franklin came off as unprofessional and something of a lecher. He will have a fling with a singer in an upcoming episode.

Biggs is glad he's getting out of Medlab a lot more this season. He was especially happy to

get to swashbuckle with Marcus Cole (Jason Carter) in "Exogenesis".

The usual costume contest was held Saturday evening, hosted by Myhr. Myhr is the alterego of a Dallas TV station employee. He hosted a children's show years ago and they let him keep the costume, which vaguely resembles Vincent from *Beauty and the Beast*. He's a very popular emcee in these parts.

I only saw two B5 costumes: a Centauri woman and a Psi Corp representative. Both costumes were well done.

The highlight, though, was the Ms. Aggiecon contest. Each year, anyone who wishes is encouraged to try out. Myhr was entered into the contest as "Miss Kitty". Richard Biggs was also persuaded to enter! He himself chose the alias of "Rochelle". The judges picked the two favorites, Miss Kitty and Rochelle, to be co-Ms. Aggiecons. They danced the first dance to "Baby Got Back" by Sir Mix-A-Lot!

It's traditional for the previous Ms Aggiecon to return to crown the next winner. Richard Biggs swore that he would return as Rochelle, complete with appropriate outfit, to crown his successor. I can't wait! 

Jerrie Marchand (jerriem@aol.com)

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS WITH BABYLON 5 PERSONNEL

Following are conventions that will be featuring BABYLON 5 personalities. Be aware that guest changes may occur due to last minute problems – unless a guest is confirmed to attend they may not have a commitment to appear! Send get a quick response to any inquiries send an SASE. 

Marcon 31, May 3-5, Hyatt Regency Columbus/Greater Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH. JMS, Richard Biggs and Patricia Tallman are scheduled to appear. Contact: 614/475-8181; marcon@infinet.com; <http://www.infinet.com/~marcon>

Parliament of Dreams, May 3-5, Radisson Hotel, Brisbane Australia. Jerry Doyle is scheduled to appear. Contact: Parliament of Dreams, P.O. Box 492, Corinda, Queensland 4075, Australia; 07 3266-4040.

For The Kids: A Star Trek/Sci-Fi Convention, May 10-12. Claudia Christian and Majel Barrett-Roddenberry are scheduled to appear. Contact: The Kids, Inc., P.O. Box 123, Quince, VA 22965; 1-800/236-6404

LepreCon 22, May 17-19, Francisco Grande Resort, Casa Grande, AZ. Adam "Mojo" Lebowitz is scheduled to appear. Contact: LepreCon 22, PO Box 26665, Tempe Arizona 85285; 602/945-6890; jpatton@primenet.com, mwillmoth@bix.com

SciFi Dreamin', May 24-26, Lycoming College, Williamsport, PA. Michael O'Hare is scheduled to appear. Contact: SciFi Dreamin', 1738 E. Third Street, Williamsport, PA 17701; <http://www.hway.net/dreamin>; scifidream@aol.com

Wolf 359/The Encounter, June 7-10, Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. JMS, Bruce Boxleitner, Michael O'Hare, Stephen Furst, Bill Mumy, Ron Thornton, and Greg Funk and Fionagh Cush from Optic Nerve have been invited. Contact: Wolf 359/The Encounter, 37 Branksome Road,

Southend-on-sea, Essex, SS2 4HG, England.

Chicago Comicon, June 21-23, Rosemont Convention Center, Rosemont, IL. JMS is scheduled to appear. Contact: The Chicago Comicon, 6830 Camden Road, Downers Grove, IL 60513; 708/852-2514; sysrich@uchimvs1.uchicago.edu; 74667.2260@compuserve.com

Babcom '96, June 22-23, Le Palais, Hammersmith, London. Guests are to include Jerry Doyle, Andrea Thompson, Claudia Christian, Peter Jurasik, Richard Biggs, Mira Furlan, and Jason Carter. Contact: Stargazer Productions International Ltd., 4 Aspenwood House, Ipsley Street, Redditch, 898 7AR, England; 0891-517037.

RebelCon, July 5-7, Taunton, MA. Michael O'Hare, Richard Biggs and Mojo are scheduled to appear. Contact: World's End Productions, 10 Rankin Street, Worcester, MA 01605.

Shore Leave 18, July 12-14, Hunt Valley Marriott Inn, Hunt Valley, MD. Richard Biggs, Peter David, Tim DeHaas are confirmed to appear. Contact:

Shore Leave 18, P.O. Box 6809, Townson, MD 21285-6809; 410/821-5563.

Fantasticon, August 2-4, Los Angeles Airport and Hilton Towers, Los Angeles, CA. Bruce Boxleitner, Peter Jurasik, Mira Furlan, Richard Biggs, Stephen Furst, Pat Tallman and Walter Koenig are scheduled to appear. Contact: Fantasticon, P.O. Box 821673, South Florida, FL 33082-1673.

Toronto Trek 10, August 2-4, Regal Constellation Hotel, Toronto, Quebec, CN. Jerry Doyle is scheduled to appear. Contact: skyracer@ix.netcom.com; t.shell1@genie.com.

Concorde '96, August 23-26, Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, England. Patricia Tallman is scheduled to appear. Contact: Concorde '96, 138 Crosslands, Stantonbury, Milton Keynes, MK14 6DF, England.

Rising Star, October 12, Salem, VA. Richard Biggs is scheduled to appear. Contact: Rising Star Productions, 545 Howard Drive, Salem, VA 24153; 703/389-9400.



The Centaurian Sentinel

Data File No. 20



Editor-In-Chief/Publisher • Michael Zmuda
m.zmuda@genie.geis.com

Executive Editor • Tom Bateman
b5sentinel@aol.com

Senior Editor • Sandra Bruckner
bruckner@usia.gov

Associate Editor • Dennis Bateman
Media Technowizard • Mark Marmor

The Centaurian Sentinel is a newsletter dedicated to J. Michael Straczynski's television series BABYLON 5, and a forum for all beings who appreciate Science Fiction. It is sanctioned by J. Michael Straczynski. Copyright ©April 1996 by Michael Zmuda. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. BABYLON 5 is ® and © Warner Bros PTEN and Babylonian Productions, Inc. Membership includes: 12 monthly newsletters; a membership card; a free listing in The Zocalo Exchange section (20 words or less). All members also have an opportunity to have their BABYLON 5 related artwork and articles (no stories please) published in *The Centaurian Sentinel*. Annual dues are \$12 for U.S. and Canadian memberships, and \$24 for overseas memberships. Please make U.S. funds payable to Michael Zmuda. For newsletter information or for submissions contact: *The Centaurian Sentinel*, c/o Michael Zmuda, 17 Orchard Road, Putnam Valley, NY 10579-3040; m.zmuda.genie.geis.com Please include a SASE if you would like your material returned. ★ "You're so cute when you're worried."

JOHN continued from page 1

director asks for. Then when we budget out our time and materials we choose what we can do for the next week when we're building it, so we get approvals for that. Then there's usually a visual effects meeting that I attend and sometimes the set decorator and the art director as well. That's the stuff we collaborate on. There's a lot of matte paintings that we use in the show and a lot of things that are pieces of bigger composite elements from Foundation Imaging. So from that point we take it and we decide what we can and cannot do for our budget. For example our budgets are about a quarter of what we had on *The Cosby Show* when I worked on that. Of course that was on a network and they were the #1 show. My staff, I have to hand it to them, they really work miracles with the kind of money that we have. At that point, (if we're still over-budget) it goes into the producers court and John and the Production Manager figure out whether they can afford it or not. We then go back to the director and we kind of hash it around and we try to figure it out. So it's a constantly evolving process that way. We look at the sets and see which ones are important, which ones are exciting, which ones need some upgrade or the ones that we've had which don't. Sometimes the schedule drives things differently. An actor can only be here on a certain day, so we have to take one set from one stage and move it to another to make sure everything's working right.

CS: What sort of lead time do you normally get?

Jl: Well, lead time varies; usually we only have seven days and it completely overlaps the other episode. For example if we're shooting episode #2, that Monday that we start shooting the episode, we're prepping episode #3; so it's a complete overlap. So while we're getting ready for one show we're prepping another one. The closest we've ever had a script come in was maybe ten days before it was shot. I think that happened once during the first season, but we get the scripts at least two to three weeks and usually four to five weeks ahead of time. So we get some lead time and we try to use that lead time well. Sometimes, if they know we have a special set coming up, like this new cockpit, they'll give it to us ahead of time so we can get the design kinks worked out.

CS: What is your background?

Jl: Well, my background is pretty varied. I grew up in Nevada and I went on a theater design scholarship to UNLV for undergraduate school and then I got a scholarship to NYU in the design program there. The

good thing about that was even though then I was only interested in the theatre and Broadway stage, I got involved in film because of the really great film program at NYU. At the same time I was there were people like the Cohen brothers and Spike Lee. It was a really rich time there so I got involved in art direction. I worked as a



John Iacovelli feels that designing the interior of the *White Star* was one of his most challenging experiences.



sound stage manager at NYU and got very much involved in film there, which is kind of funny because you wouldn't think you would go to New York to get involved in film.

When I got out of NYU, I did a lot of theater in New York and around the country, but I also was doing commercials. I got a call for a job at NBC as an assistant art director. I moved out to the West Coast and worked at NBC. That led to other jobs both in theater and in film and from then I've kept pretty busy. From working at NBC, where I worked on *The Cosby Show*, *A Different World* and *Santa Barbara*, I went on to working on *Honey, I Shrunk The Kids*, which I was the art director on. I've done other films, one called *Ruby In Paradise* which was an interesting film, a couple of TV projects for Showtime and I've been nominated for an ACE award a couple of times. I still do theater. I did a Broadway show a couple of years ago and so I keep busy in a bunch of different areas. That's basically my background, strongly from theater, but with a great passion for film.

CS: There were a lot of changes between the pilot and the first season and then also between the first season and the second. Can you elaborate on the process as to what happened to necessitate

those changes?

Jl: Well, after the pilot we sat down and looked at it. It was a crazy time because we had a very tight budget and a very brutal schedule. I don't know that anybody believed that we'd actually make it, but we did. I remember getting a phone call from John Copeland and he said that it was because of me and my department that the whole picture had come in under budget, as we'd saved so much money in the art department. Well, part of it was that a lot of us were from theater and we knew not to go over budget and part of it was that we knew we couldn't waste money. We did make some mistakes on the pilot, and part of it was just because of the speed at which we were all working and part of it was just because we learned things as we went. The same thing is true from season one to season two and season two to season three. The great things about this show for us is that because we've been able to not just do thirteen shows, but to do twenty-two at a time we've been able to really see how things grow and change in how we shoot them. From the pilot to the first season there were many, many changes. The big changes from season one to two were the addition of Earhart's, which is sort of the officer's club, and a reconfiguration of the crew corridors around where Ivanova's, Londo's, Delenn's and Sheridan's quarters are. We're always trying to improve the show, from graphics and from every point of view. Also from the level of finish The basic level of finish that we wanted to do and we wanted to make sure that things were better. So I think that if you look at the pilot there's some really interesting sets and things that we've never seen again because we didn't set them up that way. We certainly changed the complete customs area in the pilot. We changed the business area. We had some sets that we really liked in the pilot that we can never set up as big again. There was a shot of the casino in the pilot, a big panning shot that was in the opening credits for the first season; but our casino was never that big again. We were able to do some special things at the end of the second season. We set up a much bigger garden and to facilitate that we had to tear down the med bay which is on the other side of the garden and so that gave us the opportunity this year, from season two to season three to make a big change in the Med Bay to really make it more colorful and more interesting, to put the Isolab really in the middle of it to get a connection to a side infirmary. You know, I'm really proud of the way the show looks now. I think that we went from

continued on page 5

VULCON '96

Towson Sheridan, Towson, MD

March 9-10, 1996

Guests: Jerry Doyle, Arne Starr,

Tim DeHaas, Roxanne Biggs-Dawson

I had a chance to visit Vulcon '96 in Towson, Maryland recently. It was a good con – well organized and a good mix of things to do and see.

The first session I took in was Arne Starr, comic book illustrator and sysop of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Round Table 2 for the GENie on-line service. Arne brought a boat load of clips for upcoming features and TV shows. His also showed John Hudgens' B5 music video "Requiem". That was a real crowd-pleaser; sends shivers up and down my spine every time I hear and see it. John has done a total of three music videos and currently is working on number four. These really fall into the must-see category. (I hope the B5 Fan Club will make them available – HINT, HINT!) Arne also conducted a B5 panel discussion later in the day. A surprise addition to the panel was Tim DeHaas (author of several B5 comic books). The crowd for the session was so large, the room had to be opened up into two rooms.

Jerry Doyle shared the honors with Roxanne Biggs-Dawson, B'Elena from *Star Trek: Voyager*. Both were wonderful convention guests, full of energy and enthusiasm. There's a lot of Jerry in Garibaldi and vis-a-versa. They share that sort of irreverent outlook on life. He said that during the week his body is like a temple; on weekends it's an amusement park. Jerry talked about auditioning for the part, thinking at first it was some sort of comedy, but was very grateful for having been given the chance to do this part. Like all B5 guests, however, he was very careful not to give anything away. Jerry says he really doesn't want to know

what will be happening in upcoming episodes. He feels it might influence how he portrays his character and prefers to do the show one episode at a time.

During the question and answer session, Jerry explained that he left Wall Street because the fun had gone out of it. Although he was very good at what he did, he decided it was time for a change. He announced to his boss that he was quitting, jumped in his car, drove to California and started knocking on doors.

When asked who he preferred working with – Michael O'Hare or Bruce Boxleitner Jerry said that both actors bring different qualities to the show. He said he liked working with Michael and he likes working with Bruce. Jerry pointed out other changes that have taken place in the show since the pilot – replacing Johnny Sekka as the doctor, Tamlyn Tomika as the second in command, Pat Tallman as the telepath. Jerry felt this had added to the depth of the show and quickly said that he was very glad to see his name appearing on the casting sheet each week.

What was Andrea Thompson doing? Andrea (Jerry's wife) has landed a continuing role on *JAG*. *JAG* had been in hiatus while it was undergoing some renovation and was returning to the lineup with a different look and new characters, including Andrea.

Jerry explained that Andrea left B5 because she wanted to work more and have the storyline in B5 do more with her character. Since she

had also been receiving a number of offers for outside work, she asked to be released from her contract and the management agreed.

When asked how he kept in shape, Jerry explained that he actually was a little out of

shape. He had broken his arm on the set and that we would be seeing him in a cast in upcoming episodes. He went through a very funny recreation of the accident, where the scene was shot several times before he went into shock and had to be taken to the hospital to have his arm set.

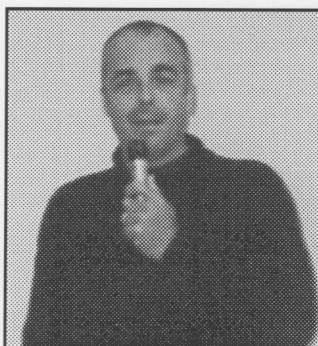
Roxanne followed Jerry on stage. Her fan club auctioned off a

drawing done by one of it's members for her favorite charity. Jerry bought the picture for \$125, but later returned with it to see if he could get more money for the charity by reselling the picture and adding an invitation to have coffee with Roxanne and him Sunday morning. The bidding for the piece was lively and eventually went for \$400.

The highlight of Sunday's presentation was Jerry teasing the waiter he'd had the night before about not bringing his coffee. The waiter was an extremely good sport and actually snuck some coffee onto the stage for Jerry. Jerry's response, he went over, took a sip and said "Cold, figures." Everyone cracked up.

It was surprising to see how much of Jerry can be found in Garibaldi. Both seem to love life and want to live it to it's fullest. Jerry likes to cook and fly airplanes. B5 seems to have done a perfect job of casting – a very close fit all the way around. ☺

Sandra Bruckner



Jerry Doyle is very grateful to be part of BABYLON 5.

photos ©1996 Sandra Bruckner

In Praise of Vir

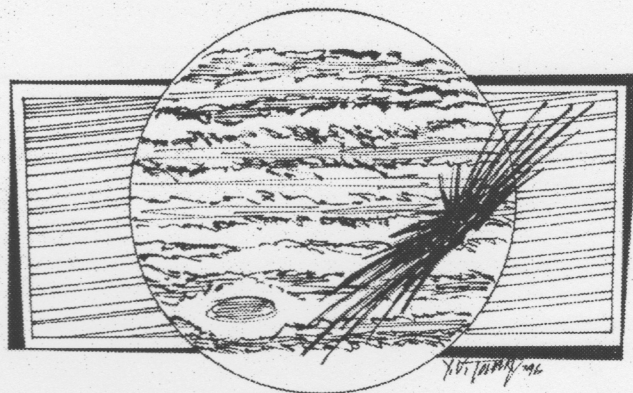
When troops were first mustered by Centauri Prime
And Londo was drinking his vodka and lime
Or something else potent to bring him good cheer,
Nobody noticed his attache Vir.

When Shadows had gathered and shot full of holes
The forces the Narns sent – those poor wretched souls –
But everyone still thought, "It can't happen here,"
Nobody listened to poor little Vir.

When Londo's role strengthened, his clothing got dark.
He changed from a buffoon to the deadliest shark.
His conscience a-tremble, he thought, "Now I fear
I've got to get rid of my attache Vir."

Then sent to Minbari and given a raise
Soon Vir was converted to Minbari ways,
And stronger and stronger we'll see him appear –
Don't under estimate Centauri Vir.

Who knows what will happen on Babylon 5?
It may soon be covered on ISN (live)
But wether the trouble be far or be near,
Someone will listen to sensible Vir!



©1996 Vul Tolbert

The Psi Cop

There once was a Psi Cop named Bester
Who said, "Now it's starting to fester –
When I go to B5
I come back alive,
But they treat me like some kind of jester."

poetry by Donna Edsall

what you really could say was a low budget look at the beginning of the first season to really hold our own against the Trek shows and the other space shows that have come along. I think that you wouldn't know that we have about half the money that the other shows have. I think that the look is there and the large part of it is due to the crew that we have. I have a wonderful staff and a wonderful crew, people that work very hard. I'm very happy that people here have such a good attitude and such a good work ethic because we really get a lot of bang for our buck here.

CS: Speaking of responsible budgeting, what did you think of *Waterworld*?

Jl: I thought it was kind of boring at times, I thought some of it was laughable. Some of the things he (Kevin Costner) said to what's-her-name (Jeanne Tripplehorn) were just laughable, and that kid (Tina Majorino) . . . hell, I would have thrown her overboard, wouldn't you? I mean if it was my life or the kid's life.

CS: How about from a production standpoint?

Jl: I keep thinking, "Why weren't they smarter?", why didn't somebody say "Gee, we can get better production value on a sound stage, where we can control the elements." Why is this news? That's why we have sound stages. Why build all that out there in the middle of nowhere. I think that's the problem with film, it's that they think it *has* to be *real*, it has to be in the *real* places. I was up for the job of the designer on *White Dwarf* and basically I couldn't do it because I was doing this. I talked with the producers and basically they wanted to do it all completely on location. There was a lot of stuff at night, a lot of interiors and I didn't understand why half of it wasn't filmed on a sound stage where you can control the costs, where you can control the sets. And I think they just think differently, I don't understand what they think they're getting for their money. They're trying to get something that's just not there.

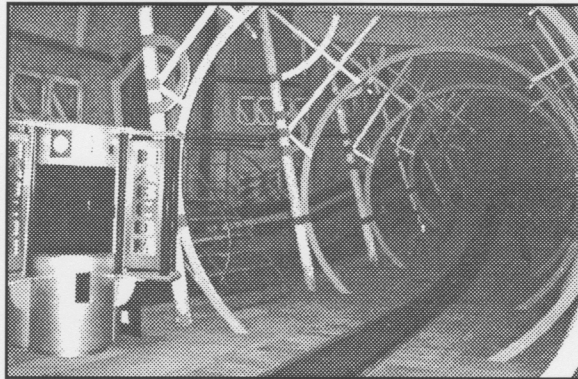
The only problem with *Waterworld* was the color. I feel you can't have the same color actors and the same color background, because then you can't pick the actors out away from the background. Someone else pointed out to me that if there's no earth or no dirt around, why are the people so dirty? Everybody looked grimy and gritty like they had been rolling around in the mud. I think there were definitely problems with it. Did you like it?

CS: I thought it was okay, but not worth \$200,000,000.

Jl: Unfortunately, parts of it looked low-budget.

CS: What was your favorite episode?

Jl: Gosh, that's a really hard question. Maybe "And Now For A Word" because it was so different and we got to do a lot of fun things on it. I think "Soul Hunter" is a personal favorite just because everything



John Iacovelli has a skill in designing corridors for *BABYLON 5* that appear endless.

photo ©1996 Tom Bateman

was new and we were having fun and that was one of the first episodes that we shot. I think "And Now For A Word" also because it had an interesting edge. and I think also this one we just did with Adam Nimoy that he directed ("Passing Through Gethsemane") that was one of more fun ones to work on, but they're all different. That one I thought had real potential because we had achieved a real variety of looks that we don't have and John Copeland pointed that out to me. Part of that is just in the writing, there were several off-the-station scenes that are pretty compelling. I think maybe those were my favorites.

CS: Are there any plans to do any location shooting?

Jl: We can't really do location shooting because of the way we're set up. I don't know . . . I see that sometimes on the *Next Generation* or on the other shows, where they go off into some creek bed or they're obviously up in Griffith Park in a cave. To me, for the production value, I don't know, it just doesn't pay off to me. I think that it does open up the show some. I don't think so, with our budget constraints, and what that means when you take a shooting crew off set. We do go to some significant other planets and there are some interesting scenes that you see bits of. Maybe that's better for us, seeing just a little bit of a Centauri Palace or some other scene, I think that opens things up. I can't imagine that we will do much location shooting.

CS: What was the most challenging experience working here on *BABYLON 5*?

Jl: Well, I think one of the most challenging experiences, and also hopefully one of the best payoffs, was working on this season with the White Star. We were trying to design a ship that was different, but similar to anything that you've seen before. We didn't want it to be like other things on *BABYLON 5*. There are so many space shows and so many space ships, from *Star Wars* to *Forbidden Planet*. I don't think that we made things completely different, but as far as the most challenging single set was definitely the White Star because we didn't want it to look like *Babylon 5*, it had to look completely different, it had to be a different technology, and to me I think we achieved that. Its a very dark set, perhaps too dark, but I think its very interesting and very mysterious. Its sort of lightish colored on the outside and then very dark on the inside and I think it's got a very interesting appeal to it.

CS: What is the best part of your experience working here on *BABYLON 5*?

Jl: The best part has been working with the people here and working on a show that's not like a western or a sitcom where you just have to get a kitchen or a French restaurant or a typical kind of set. Our imaginations can really soar and really we're not so much limited by the budget as we are by our own imaginations. So the best part is that we kind of make the rules. Certainly Joe is a terrific guide and a terrific mentor and we always defer to him or ask him for his advice on many things and the fact that he has made himself so available. I would say the three basic most fun things about working on the show is the staff that I work with, the stories that I work with and the freedom that we're given. John Copeland is very much a hands-on producer. He supervises every department, which is very comforting. You don't feel like you're putting yourself out on a limb, you feel like he really understands your problems and he wants the show to look good. He's not the kind of producer that says - you've gotta keep it, we can only do this because this is all the money we have. He understand that and says, "Well, here let's make these choices, let's trade this for that and get the best look possible. So that's the best part of the show. You know, you would think it would be, "Oh well, that it's popular on TV," or whatever; but really the best part of the show is the people here and I think most everyone agrees to that. ☺

transcribed by **Elaine Earl**
edited by **T.J. Bateman**

BABYLON 5 EPISODES

Confessions And Lamentations (#218)

Commander Ivanova reports to Captain Sheridan that a Markab transport is now ten hours overdue. Sheridan authorizes Zeta Squadron to investigate. Ivanova explains that they will do so as soon as Lt. Warren Keffer returns. He has made periodic expeditions into hyperspace after supposedly encountering an unknown ship there several months before. Sheridan tells Ivanova to put a stop to any such outings, and to prep Keffer's ship once he returns.

Dr. Franklin is doing a routine check on the body of a dead Markab. With him is Dr. Lazarenn, a Markab physician, who suggests that Franklin need not waste time, as he has already completed his own report. Franklin reassures him that he means no offense, but finds it odd that this is the third Markab to die of natural causes in the past week, and arranges for an independent autopsy.

Ivanova briefs Zeta Squadron on their mission: the Carti, a Markab civilian transport, is located in a nearby sector, but is overdue, and has failed to answer hails from B5. Zeta Squadron is to investigate and render assistance if necessary. As the pilots disperse, Ivanova explains to Keffer the Captain's directive on his hyperspace jaunts. Keffer protests, until Ivanova orders him to stand down. Reluctantly, he complies and prepares for the mission.

Delenn has invited Sheridan over to her quarters for a ceremonial dinner. Lennier has gone to painstaking lengths to prepare the meal, observing a litany of rituals and traditions. Delenn explains that additional ones must also be observed in the consumption of the meal, particularly long periods of meditation. Though feeling awkward, Sheridan continues to go along politely.

Zeta Squadron arrives at the Carti, which lies adrift in space. Keffer attempts to make contact, but there is no response. A scan reveals no life signs, meaning that over 200 Markabs are dead inside. On B5, Franklin finishes the autopsy on the Markab, and asks his orderlies to find the other Markab bodies for autopsies. Zeta squadron returns to the station, with the Carti in tow. Keffer informs Ivanova to prepare a full medical team.

Sheridan is awoken from his "meditation". Summoned to the docking bay, he excuses himself from Delenn and Lennier. Dr. Lazarenn declares that the Carti is Markab property, and that they may not board. Franklin storms in and reveals that the Markab who reportedly died of natural causes were actually the victims of an infectious plague and that the Markabs on the transport had died of it as well.

Confronted, Lazarenn confesses that the disease is both terminal and contagious. The disease, known as "Drafa", was so named for the place where it first occurred. The plague wiped out the population of an island called Drafa that was known for its debauchery. The Markabs took it as a divine punishment, and as time went on, Drafa became a legend.

A year ago, the first new case of Drafa appeared. Unfortunately, the Markab response was one of fear and panic. Because they believed Drafa was a punishment for immoral behavior, the very implication was scandalous, and he was forbidden to speak out about it. "They were afraid! They were afraid," explains a frustrated Dr. Lazarenn, who has worked with other Markab doctors to try to find a cure, but they have been hampered by lack of support. Also, it is unknown whether the disease can spread to other races. Elsewhere, a Markab child finds her father dead. Delenn attempts to comfort her.

Franklin briefs the command staff on the plague. Once the disease comes out of dormancy, it attacks the central nervous system, with death occurring within 24 hours. As yet, it is unknown whether the disease is spread through physical or airborne contact, meaning that the entire station could be contaminated. Sheridan authorizes a station-wide quarantine, and Franklin urges them not to isolate the Markabs from the population, as it might spread the disease faster. However, he wants the Markab population to come to Medlab for preliminary examinations, so that he can find clues to the disease. "This is gonna get real ugly, real fast.", Garibaldi warns as they adjourn.

As the other species protest the quarantine, hundreds of Markabs flood Medlab to be examined. Markab ambassador Fashar decries the examina-

tions as an affront to Markab morality. Though Sheridan attempts to explain, he announces that the Markabs will isolate themselves from others.

Informed that a Pak'Ma'Ra has been found dead of unknown causes, Franklin orders his medical staff to work, but their response is mediocre. Dr. Lazarenn arrives, and offers to conduct the examinations himself, and that once exposed to contamination, he will remain in the Isolab.

Ivanova briefs Sheridan about increased acts of violence against Markabs.

Delenn comes to him and asks Sheridan to be allowed to minister aid to the Markab people in the isolation zone. Sheridan tries to reason with her, but she is adamant. Before leaving, Delenn reassures him that she will return soon, but that if she does not, "I will see you, in a little while, in a place where no shadows fall."

Franklin and Lazarenn make slow progress on the search for a cure. Franklin compares Drafa to the Black Death, a massive plague that swept across continental Europe on Earth in the 14th Century. Much like the present, the Black Death was accompanied by fear and paranoia. Suddenly, Lazarenn stumbles. He has now begun to show the first symptoms of the disease.

Delenn once again comforts the Markab child, who has been separated from her mother. The medical staff confirms that the Pak'Ma'Ra was killed by the plague. Franklin angrily spurs them out of their fear and into action to find a cure. In the isolation zone, Delenn reassures the child, recalling a time when she was separated from her own parents. Lennier then arrives with the mother. The joy of their reunion is cut short, as the child falters; she is now infected.

Dr. Lazarenn last words are barely a whisper as he passes away. Enraged, Franklin knocks over a cart in frustration. At that moment, the computer announces that it has found a match between Markab and Pak'Ma'Ra physiology.

Soon afterward, Franklin announces to Sheridan that based on the match, his staff has been able to synthesize an antidote that may lead to a cure.

Although humans and most other species are safe, they must stop the disease before it can possibly mutate. He has prepared a couple hundred doses to test on the Markabs.

Upon arriving, they find the isolation zone completely silent. The Markab, all five thousand of them, are dead. Only Delenn and Lennier remain. Lennier is clearly shaken, and Delenn collapses into Sheridan's waiting arms.

Later, Delenn thanks Sheridan for all he had done, but the Captain defers credit to Franklin and his staff. ISN reports that the plague has practically wiped out the Markab civilization. As a bartender makes a wisecrack at the devastation, Franklin can only shake his head in frustration as he leaves.

"Confessions And Lamentations" was written by J. Michael Straczynski, produced by John Copeland, directed by Kevin G. Cremin, with Fred V. Murphy, II as Director of Photography. Dr. Lazarenn - Jim Norton, Markab mother - Diane Adair, Markab girl - Bluejean Ashley Secrist, Markab Ambassador Fashar - Kim Strauss, Markab victim - Michael McKenzie, guard - Mike Manzoni, bartender - Dan Woren, Doctor - Rosie Malek-Yonan, Human - Andrew Young, ISN reporter - Maggie Egan. 

The Long Twilight Struggle (#220)

Ambassador Londo Mollari arrives on Centauri Prime, where Lord Refa greets him at the emperor's palace. He confirms that Cartagia is merely a puppet, while Refa and his associates are in control. Tired, Londo asks why he has been summoned. With a wide grin, Refa explains "The war which begun six months ago is about to end; and you, Londo Mollari, will be the architect of our victory."

On Babylon 5, Delenn is in her quarters meditating. "Hello, dear friend," she says as laughter is heard. Elsewhere, C&C monitors unusual activity from Epsilon 3. Ivanova informs Sheridan of the readings when her transmission breaks up. Suddenly, a Minbari male materializes behind him, sug-



Dr. Stephen Franklin races time to find a cure for a disease that threatens to wipe out all of the Markabs on the station.

gesting that they talk. He introduces himself as Draal. Sheridan remembers him from the station records as the custodian of the Great Machine on Epsilon 3. Draal invites him down for a visit and then disappears, but not before telling him to bring someone else along. "You'll know who I am referring to."

In his quarters, G'Kar listens aghast as his uncle G'Sten, a Narn war leader, delivers a sobering report on the war with the Centauri. The war is going far worse for the Narn than is generally known, and that eventual defeat may be unavoidable. G'Sten proposes a bold all-out offensive against Gorash 7, a strategic Centauri supply center. Destroying it would force the Centauri to pull back, a move which might give the Narn precious time to gather strength. G'Kar notes that mounting such a strike would leave the Narn homeworld vulnerable to a counterattack. G'Sten is confident that even with the worst of projections, they will still be able to adequately defend homeworld.

Refa explains to Londo that reliable intelligence suggests that the Narn will make a move at Gorash 7. Despite the incredible risk, Refa is convinced that the Narn are just desperate enough to try it. Londo is flabbergasted when he asks him to bring in his 'allies', while the main Centauri fleet mounts a direct assault on the Narn homeworld. Refa implores him to help end the war quickly, as Londo expresses his reservations. Londo finally agrees to send in his forces to defend the supply center, but promises that this will be the last time. Confident, Refa says, "Cheer up, Londo. By the time you return to Babylon 5, the Narns will be at our feet, and this time, we will keep them there."

Garibaldi is very skeptical of the message, despite Delenn's reassur-



A rejuvenated and enlightened Draal offers the Great Machine's help to Babylon 5 in their battle with the Shadows.

ances. Sheridan tells his security chief that he can't see a good reason why he should turn down the invitation, and that he will bring Delenn along with him.

Londo enters the royal court, where Refa invites him aboard a Centauri battlecruiser. They will be traveling to witness the conquest of the Narn homeworld firsthand. On B5, G'Kar visits Medlab, where Dr. Franklin and his staff are aiding many wounded Narn refugees. Franklin recounts that one of the refugees reported that the Centauri interrogated him about the Narn homeworld's defenses and that their questioning was unusually urgent. G'Kar leaves, deeply troubled by the report.

The shuttle lands inside Epsilon 3, and Delenn guides Sheridan into the heart of the Great Machine. The captain is awestruck by the sight. Elsewhere, G'Sten is unconvinced as G'Kar expresses his suspicions. He announces that the attack mission is already underway as G'Kar pleads for more time to gather evidence. On Epsilon 3, Delenn and Sheridan come to where Draal is embedded in the machine. A holographic image of the Minbari teacher greets them. He explains that he has learned much during the past year since he first entered the machine, including many personal things about Sheridan. He then offers to ally the Great Machine with them to battle the coming darkness. "And that in the long twilight struggle which lies ahead of us, there is the possibility of hope," he declares.

A fleet numbering seven Narn heavy cruisers leaps out of hyperspace at Gorash 7. As they prepare to attack, they detect four ships moving to intercept them. G'Sten, realizing that they cannot withdraw quickly enough, orders his fleet to attack. The lead cruisers fire energy mines that detonate in front of the Shadow warships. Their advance slows, and one of the Shadow ships ejects a cluster which explodes into a cloud of Shadow fighters. The Narn are thrown into disarray as the Shadows press their attack.

In his quarters, G'Kar is surrounded by candles as he recites prayers from the Book of G'Quon. Several Narn cruisers mount a counterattack, and by concentrating their fire, they succeed in damaging one of the Shadow warships. G'Kar's prayers turn passionate and desperate as the Narn fleet is completely annihilated. G'Sten orders an immediate retreat as

the jump engines recharge. As the two remaining cruisers break off, the relentless Shadows close in on them. One fires an energy charge that collapses the opening jump points. The retreating cruisers are caught in the energy wave and disintegrate. The Shadows regroup around the stricken ship and disappear into hyperspace. G'Kar opens his eyes, and with a dark realization, extinguishes the last burning candle.

Delenn wonders whether Draal is troubled by the solitude of the Great Machine. Draal explains that he is not alone, and that there are several beings which inhabit the machine and help to run it. Suddenly, he stops, realizing that something terrible has happened. He urges Sheridan and Delenn to return to Babylon 5. After they leave, Draal calls for Zathras, one of his helpers. Frustrated, he disappears into the machine to look for him.

Ivanova informs Garibaldi that the final offensive against the Narns has begun. She authorizes security to lock down the station before riots begin. As ISN delivers the breaking news, Narn and Centauri begin to fight each other all over the station. Sheridan and Delenn arrive back. Ivanova briefs the captain on the situation. Around Narn, the Centauri warships encounter little resistance. Using mass drivers, they obliterate the planet from orbit. Londo watches in silence as the relentless destruction continues.

As the onslaught continues into its fourth day, ISN reports that the Earth, Minbari, and the Vorlon governments have condemned the Centauri for their use of mass drivers. The station is quiet, as riot-equipped security is out in force. In his quarters, G'Kar watches helplessly as Kha'Mak reports that the continued bombardment will likely force the Narn to surrender unconditionally. He pleads for G'Kar to remain where he is. As the only member of the Kha'Ri still safe, he relays to him the Narn governing body's final instructions. Later, Sheridan looks up from his desk to see G'Kar walk slowly into his office. The Narn ambassador struggles for words as he asks the captain to grant him sanctuary on the station.

Londo returns to Babylon 5 and asks for an immediate meeting of the B5 Advisory Council. There, he announces the complete and unconditional surrender of the Narn Regime. He announces that the Kha'Ri has been officially disbanded, and that its members will be tried for war crimes. Also, he declares that severe penalties will be assessed if the Narn attempt resistance. The council representatives are dismayed by the Draconian nature of the Centauri occupation.

Finally, Londo demands that "Citizen" G'Kar be repatriated back to Narn as a war criminal. Sheridan refuses, declaring that G'Kar is eligible for sanctuary and has requested it. Delenn endorses the decision, citing the station's neutrality. Londo however demands that G'Kar be immediately ejected from the Advisory Council. Slowly, a beaten and humiliated G'Kar stands up. In a deep, measured tone, the Narn ambassador gives a brief but defiant message. "Though it take a thousand years, we will be free," he declares in his final words before leaving the council chambers.

ISN reports that celebrations have been declared on Centauri Prime, which announces that it will annex several more worlds adjacent to it. Sheridan meets with G'Kar and pledges that he will do whatever he can to help the Narn regain their freedom. G'Kar hesitatingly takes the captain's hand. Ivanova informs Sheridan that Ambassador Delenn has asked to meet him in Council Chambers.

There, several humans and Minbari are gathered. Along with them are Delenn, Garibaldi, and Ambassador Kosh. Delenn and Garibaldi explain that the people assembled are called Rangers, and that they are preparing for the great war that is to come, now that the Narn-Centauri conflict has concluded. Delenn announces that she will now share authority over the Rangers with Sheridan, who accepts. He declares, "We will serve notice to the parliaments of conquerors that a line has been drawn against the darkness, and that we will hold that line, no matter the cost."

"The Long Twilight Struggle" was written by J. Michael Straczynski, produced by John Copeland, directed by John C. Flinn, III, with Fred V. Murphy, II as Director of Photography. John Schuck - Draal, Rif Hutton - ISN reporter, William Forward - Lord Refa, W. Morgan Sheppard - G'Sten, Neil Bradley - Narn #2, Jonathan Chapman - Narn Second, Joshua Cox - Tech #1, Elisa Beth Garver - Tech #2. 

summaries by **Dennis Bateman**

Editor's Note: A typo was made in issue #19. The credit for "In The Shadow Of Z'Ha'Dum" should have read "directed by David J. Eagle, produced by John Copeland".

Filming for BABYLON 5's third season has been completed. Now is the time we should all be concerned for it's fourth season renewal, the final decision should come by the end of May. It is important that you write, e-mail, and call the TV station that carries B5 in your area to let them know how much you enjoy the series. Make your letter brief and polite, and address it to the station's Director of Programming. Other important people to write letters of support to are: Mr. Dick Robertson, President, Domestic Television, Warner Bros. Television, 4000 Warner Boulevard, Burbank, CA 91522; Mr. Robert Daly, Chairman, Warner Bros. Inc., 400 Warner Boulevard, Burbank, CA 91522.

The order form below was posted on-line April 10 by Jim Lochett, coordinator for *The Official Babylon 5 Fan Club*. J. Michael Straczynski mentioned the following about merchandise offered by the fan club. "Right now, what we're looking to do via the Fan Club are: patches of all kinds, EA and other pins, possibly scripts, B5 caps and Agamemnon crew hats (complete with the Aggy's serial number and silhouette, in naval style), Links, posters and a few other things, maybe some limited edition stuff. Not a lot, we're just feeling our way here for now."

DC Comics may be continuing the BABYLON 5 title soon, but without JMS's writing. He recently made a disappointing post on Compuserve regarding his involvement with the comic. "DC has a policy that they will

not allow writers final say on their books. Only the editors. On all books written by other writers, as per their contract with DC, I via WB, have final approval. However, if I function as a writer, then I must give up that right and allow myself to be rewritten by the editor. It's a jurisdictional matter. Suffice to say I was appalled by some of the rewriting done on what I'd turned in on the four issue arc.

"Consequently I will be happy to provide information to keep the story current with the series, farm out premises so it stays canon, and work closely with the writers in my approval status. That way I can make sure the work is to our standards; if I write for the book, I cannot do so, because the editor insists on rewriting me to maintain DC's jurisdictional structure."

Episode #321 is titled "Shadow Dancing". Episode #322 is still untitled since JMS is trying to keep this one a surprise. Robert England appears in episode #319, "Grey 17 Is Missing".  **Myki**

EPISODE SCHEDULE: (R)=repeat, date is week episode airs

4/15 Sic Transit Vir
4/22 A Late Delivery From Avalon (w/Michael York)
4/29 Ship Of Tears (w/Walter Koenig)
5/6 Interludes And Examinations
5/13 War Without End: Part One (w/Michael O'Hare)
5/20 War Without End: Part Two

THE ZOCALO EXCHANGE

PEN PALS WANTED

WOULD LIKE TO COMMUNICATE VIA MAIL WITH B5 ENTHUSIASTS. I enjoy most sci-fi, including Classic Trek but not spin-offs. Contact: Brian G. Walsh, 1207 Mound Avenue, Jackson, MI 49203-2917.

LOOKING FOR PEN PALS FROM VIRGINIA, & ALL OVER IN FACT. Please write to Pamela (Pam) Truesdale, 6007 Holly Trace Terrace, Chesterfield, VA 23832. B.D. 9-11-54, W.D. 3-12-77.



The Official Babylon 5 Fan Club

Join today and you will receive the Official Membership Kit, including:

- A Subscription to *The Universe Today*: The Official Newsletter of the B5FC filled with exclusive interviews, news about Babylon 5, and exciting merchandise offers.
- An 8x10 Cast Photo
- Full Color Babylon 5 Mini-Poster (13"x20")
- B5 Fan Club Button & Full Color Sticker
- Membership Certificate (Signed by the show's Executive Producers J. Michael Straczynski and Douglas Netter)
- Membership ID Card granting you discounts on merchandise, conventions, etc., as well as access to the Members Only section of TheStation.com, the B5 Fan Club Web-site (to be up May 1996).

Plus as a bonus, the first 100 people to join get:

- A Limited Collection Sticker of the alternate B5 Logo as designed by artist Peter Ledger.

To Give a Membership as a Gift, simply make a copy of the entry form, fill in the name of who you wish to make a member, and send it off. (Don't forget to include your name on the Suggestions line, so that we can include a gift card.)

Each year the Renewal Kit will offer new and different goodies, savings, and of course another year's subscription to *The Universe Today*.

Remember, this is more than just your run of the mill fan club, the Babylon 5 fans have time and time again gone that extra step for the show, and the Babylon 5 Fan Club is our way of giving something back to those who have been so loyal to us.

----- CLIP OR COPY AND GIVE TO A FRIEND -----

YES! I want to join **The Official Babylon 5 Fan Club**. Please send me membership kit to:

Name: _____ Age: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ Country: _____
e-mail address: _____ Local Station you watch B5 on: _____
Suggestions: _____

____ I am already on the mailing list. ____ I got this form from a friend.

Enclosed is \$12.95 for a U.S. membership; \$14.95 for a Canadian membership; and \$19.95 for Foreign memberships. Orders must be in U.S. funds. Send check or money order (DO NOT send cash) made payable to: Babylonian Productions/Fan Club.

Mail to: The Official Babylon 5 Fan Club, P.O. Box 856, North Hollywood, CA 91603

Please allow 5-6 weeks for delivery. Foreign and Canadian orders are shipped surface, please allow additional time for shipping.

All returned checks are subject to a \$15.00 service charge.

